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SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: UNDSS AUGUST 3 SECURITY UPDATE FOR NORTH DARFUR; MORE
SLM/A FRACTURING

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: UNDSS continues to describe the security situation in North Darfur as unstable and volatile. Shifting positions and allegiances among the rebel movements are clouding the political and security picture on the ground, increasing the threat level for NGOs. END SUMMARY.

UNDSS List of Recent Security Events

¶2. (SBU) In its August 3 security meeting, UNDSS outlined several recent security incidents, including:

-- July 27: An alleged "poisoning" incident of water in the Garsila IDP camp;

-- July 28: An OXFAM driver was killed in Hilelat after being caught up in fighting there (see septel);

-- July 31: A Development Alternatives International (a USAID implementing partner) vehicle was carjacked in Abu Shouk IDP camp. The driver was forced at gunpoint to drive the vehicle away from the camp; the perpetrators, suspected by UNDSS to be NRF, deposited the DAI employees outside of Abu Shouk and took off with the vehicle; and

-- July 31: UNDSS confirmed that Sudanese Armed Forces Antonov bombers dropped an unspecified amount of ordnance on the village of Bobai; there were no human casualties, though six animals were killed. Unexploded ordnance remains in the vicinity of the village.

UNDSS Warns of SAF Build-up, Potential for More Clashes

¶3. (SBU) UNDSS also advised that NGOs should refrain from operating in the Kulkul-Mellit-El Fasher triangle due to the build-up of GNU forces in the area and the potential for continued clashes in the area around Kulkul. UN security further observed that possible clashes between GNU troops and rebel factions near Muzbat and Birmaza dictated that these areas also be labeled as "no go" for NGOs. Action Contre La Faim (ACF) offered that security around Shangil Tobaya has declined to the point that NGOs can only function there during daylight hours; UNDSS is monitoring the situation.

SLM Shafi Breakaway Group Undecided on DPA, NRF

¶4. (SBU) UNDSS also provided brief comments on the recent fracture within SLA-Abdel Wahid. He confirmed the creation of a new faction,

led by Ahmed Abdel Shafi, but noted that four of Abdel Wahid's staunchest field commanders have not broken away with the new group.

On the margins, UNDSS stated that the new faction led by Shafi is due to meet in Asmara today to determine its stance vis-a-vis the DPA and National Redemption Front (NRF). Based on his conversation with Shafi, UNDSS opined that the rebel leader "is leaning toward support for the DPA." He expects that once a decision is taken, Shafi will return to Darfur, most likely within the next three to five days. ARC officer also briefly discussed potential GNU courses of action around Kulkul. UNDSS agreed that, given the build-up of GNU forces in the area and heightened aerial (Antonov and helicopter gunship) reconnaissance, renewed fighting in the next few days is probable.

Comment

15. (SBU) The implications of the new split within the SLA are still being sorted out. The military balance of power - whether Abdel Wahid's group or the new faction is stronger - is also unclear. News of the recent SLA fracture is still fresh and popular support for one group or the other remains undefined. A number of Fur leaders with whom ARC officer met indicated that they did not have a particularly strong inclination toward supporting Shafi, though they also noted that some Fur feel frustrated that Abdel Wahid has "sold them out" by focusing on his own quest for power rather than the plight of his tribe. END COMMENT.

HUME